

Thank you for doing your part in keeping the District's air cleaner and roads safer by having your vehicle inspected. Vehicle related air pollution in the region has been linked to increased occurrences of asthma (particularly in children), high concentrations of Ozone, and decreased visibility. Aside from reducing pollution, vehicles that pass their emissions tests typically enjoy the added benefits of increased fuel economy and more reliable performance.

If your vehicle has failed its inspection, this guide will inform you on what to do next.

Review the Provided Vehicle Inspection Report (VIR)

All vehicles will receive a VIR upon completion of their inspection. Each VIR will provide an overall Pass/Fail result along with individual test results for each test administered. Vehicles failed for emissions, brake, and/or safety inspections will receive additional information on the VIR to help diagnose and repair the failed items.

Vehicles inspections can include a combination of the following test types depending on vehicle category, model-year, weight, and fuel type:

- Safety Inspection
- Functional Brake Check
- Emissions Inspection including an On-Board Diagnostic (OBD) or Idle test
- Visual Catalyst Inspection
- Gas Cap Test

Safety Inspection

All vehicles (including trailers) are required to pass a visual safety inspection. Safety inspections will include detailed inspections of the following items when applicable:

- Documents
- Suspension
- Body
- Exhaust

- Safety
- Lights
- Glass
- Tires
- Brakes

It is required that failed safety items be properly repaired prior to re-inspection. Certain minor safety items are allowed to "Pass with Warning". Vehicles receiving a "Pass with Warning" are allowed to pass the safety portion of the test during the current inspection cycle, however they must be repaired prior to the next vehicle inspection or they will result in an overall safety failure of the vehicle. A reminder notice of the items that were given a "Pass with Warning" will be sent along with your next registration renewal paperwork from DMV.

Functional Brake Check

All vehicles with the exception of motorcycles, motorized bikes and trailers must pass a functional brake check. Vehicles failing this portion of the inspection will receive an additional printout illustrating the specific reasons for failure. These results can help your mechanic to better diagnose and correct the problem.

Emissions Inspection

All gasoline powered vehicles 1968 and newer and less than 8501 lbs gross vehicle weight will receive an emissions inspection. Vehicles 1968-1995 receive an idle inspection, while 1996 and newer vehicles receive an OBD test. In addition, all vehicles emitting excessive smoke or are unsafe for testing will be turned away.

Idle – Typical causes for failing an idle test due to high Hydrocarbon (HC) or Carbon Monoxide (CO) readings:

- Air to fuel mixture may be incorrect.
- Positive Crankcase Ventilation (PCV) valve may be malfunctioning or missing.*
- Vacuum leak present.

- Exhaust Gas Re-Circulation (EGR) may be malfunctioning. *
- Ignition timing may be incorrect.
- One or more worn, damaged, or fouled sparkplugs is present.
- Catalytic converter is clogged, missing, or ineffective. *
- Malfunctioning oxygen sensor.
- Internal engine parts may be malfunctioning or damaged.
- Dirty or contaminated engine oil.
- Clogged air filter.

* Indicates items that may or may not be standard equipment.

OBD – 1996 and newer vehicles are tested by checking the vehicle OBD system (the vehicle's computer) for problems. Causes for failing an OBD test:

- The On-board vehicle diagnostic system is reporting a failure or problem with an emissions related component or sensor. If there is a problem, the "Check Engine" or "Service Engine Soon" light may be on. If the light is on when you come in for inspection, you will fail the test.
- The Check Engine light is malfunctioning.
- The diagnostic connector is missing, damaged, or not functioning.
- During battery replacement or vehicle repair, the vehicle computer's memory is reset. Until the computer has a chance to check the emissions control system, the vehicle cannot be tested. This will require some driving for the system to check all the on-board emissions systems and become "ready" again for testing. If your vehicle has failed for being "not ready", it is recommend that the vehicle be driven for approximately one week to ensure the vehicle has enough time to become ready again before retest.

The VIR will provide specific reported trouble codes (up to 5 total when applicable) to further aid your mechanic in diagnosing and repairing the vehicles emissions systems.

Visual Catalyst Inspection

All gasoline-powered vehicles 1975 and newer and less than 8501 lbs gross vehicle weight will receive a visual catalyst inspection. Vehicles will fail the visual inspection if the catalyst is missing or has been tampered with. The catalyst must be repaired prior to re-inspection.

Gas Cap Inspection

Typical causes for failing a gas cap functional test:

- Gas cap leaks.
- Gas cap is non-removable or missing.

In most cases, simply replacing the old or missing gas cap with a new one will allow the vehicle to pass this portion of the test.

Get the Vehicle Repaired

If you intend to have your vehicle repaired by a mechanic be sure to provide the VIR and any other paperwork given to you after inspection. This will assist them in the diagnosing and repairing of your vehicle.

Federal law requires that the catalytic converter and On-Board Diagnostic system on certain vehicles be covered under warranty for up to 8 years or 80,000 miles. Be sure to call your dealer and look in your owner's manual to see if your vehicle qualifies and will be covered for these repairs by your dealer.

Owners choosing to perform the repairs themselves should consult their owners manual, under hood emissions label, and repair guide to assist in the repairing of the vehicle. Note that these repair costs will not count towards a waiver (See "Waivers" section).

Retest Your Vehicle

Vehicles re-inspected within 20-days of failure may receive two re-inspections at the DMV inspection station for no additional charge during that timeframe. The re-inspection will only check failed items. For a third re-inspection, or re-inspection after the 20-day period a \$25 inspection fee will be charged and a complete inspection will be performed.

Waivers

Vehicles not passing their emissions inspection after repair may be allowed to obtain a waiver. Waivers will only be granted for work performed by a certified mechanic on specific emissions related repairs costing \$725 or more. Original receipt for repairs must be provided in order to receive a waiver. To find out if your vehicle is eligible and what restrictions may apply, contact or see a station representative at the location below.

For more information call:

General DC DMV Phone Number at
(202) 727-5000

Inspection station information and address:

1001 Half Street, SW
Washington, DC 20024

More information can be found on the District motor vehicle inspection webpage at:

<http://www.dmv.dc.gov/serv/inspections.shtm>

Government of the District of Columbia
Department of Motor Vehicles

Motorist Information Guide:

What to Do If Your Vehicle Fails Inspection

